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CENSUS OF THE COMMONWEALTH - 30TH JUNE, 1933.

SUMMARY RELATING TO FULL-BLOOD ABORIGINALS.

The Commonwealth Statistician has made available Census Bulletin No.24 containing a summary of the analysis of the returns collected throughout the Commonwealth concerning full-blood Australian aboriginals at the Census of the 30th June, 1933.

At the general Census the collectors were instructed to ascertain as fully as possible, by means of the ordinary schedule, similar to that collected from the non-indigenous population, detailed information concerning full-blood Australian aboriginals who were in contact with the white population i.e. who were either in employment or were living in proximity to settlements. No attempt was made to obtain any particulars concerning nomadic aboriginals, who, it is estimated, comprise 14 per cent. of the total number in New South Wales, 2 per cent. in Victoria, 18 per cent. in Queensland, 69 per cent. in South Australia, 76 per cent. in Western Australia, 70 per cent. in the Northern Territory and 60 per cent. in the Commonwealth.

At the 30th June each year the Protectors of Aboriginals in the several States forward through the State Statisticians to the Commonwealth Statistician an estimate of the number of full-blood aboriginals in their respective States. It was estimated in this manner that there were approximately 60,000 full-blood aboriginals in the Commonwealth at the 30th June, 1933, of whom 24,000 were either in employment or were living in supervised camps and 36,000 were nomadic. A total of 24,446 full-blood aboriginals comprising 13,408 males and 11,038 females were actually recorded by means of the Census schedule. Although the information supplied in reply to some questions concerning many individuals was to a certain extent incomplete, and in some respects partly estimated, yet the tabulated results ascertained from the Census are sufficient to enable a very interesting and detailed analysis concerning the sociological conditions of full-blood Australian aboriginals, who were civilized or semi-civilized, to be made for the first time.

In addition to full-blood aboriginals, 20,609 half-caste Australian aboriginals, comprising 10,631 (52 per cent.) males and 9,978 (48 per cent.) females, were also enumerated at the Census. These half-castes were counted as part of the general population and were included in the Census Bulletins already issued for the several States and for the Commonwealth.

Of the estimated number of 60,101 full-blood aboriginals in Australia at the 30th June, 1933, a total of 25,623, or 42.6 per cent. were recorded in Western Australia; 18,643 or 31.0 per cent. in Northern Territory; 12,532, or 21.0 per cent. in Queensland; 1,988, or 3.3 per cent. in South Australia; 1,229, or 2.0 per cent. in New South Wales and 86, or 0.1 per cent. in Victoria. There are no full-blood aboriginals in Tasmania. It will be seen, therefore, that 94.6 per cent. of the full-blood aboriginals reside in Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory. 78 per cent. of the aboriginals recorded at the Census were located in the tropical part of Australia, and 22 per cent. in the non-tropical section, whereas only 3.8 per cent. of the non-indigenous population reside in the tropics and 96.2 per cent. in the non-tropical section of Australia.

/It had been estimated

It had been estimated previously that 54 per cent. of the total number of full-blood aboriginals in Australia were males and 46 per cent. females. And this estimate was practically confirmed by the Census results which show that of those for whom information was collected 55 per cent. were males and 45 per cent. females. The corresponding particulars for the non-indigenous population of Australia were 51 per cent. males and 49 per cent. females.

AGE: Several phenomena emerge from the Census figures which may indicate something of interest in the customs or history of the race. The first of these is in the numbers of males and females at various ages. There is, in the first place, an excess of males over females of 2,370, the number of females being only about 82 per cent. of the number of males; but when we come to the analysis according to ages, it will be observed that the ratios of males to females vary with age. In each of the five-yearly groups below ten years the numbers of males and females are practically equal. From 10 to 50 years of age, i.e., among those born since 1883, the number of females is about 18 per cent. less than the number of males, and this difference holds fairly constant for each quinquennial age group within that range of between age 10 and 50 years. Among those between 50 and 60 years of age (born between 1873 and 1883) the females are 33 per cent. less than males; and among those between 60 and 70 years, the number of females is 43 per cent. below the number of males. Among the very old (over 70 years) the disparity decreases to a difference of 25 per cent.

There is no doubt that the aboriginal women had a far more precarious existence than the men. It would appear, however, that the lives of females born after about 1880 were, in comparison with males, far less hazardous than the lives of their predecessors. The improvement shown at the time mentioned is, of course, the average experience, whereas it is probable that the improvement was much greater among those who first came under the care of protecting organizations, while the earlier unfavourable experience continued among those still following the nomadic life. The more correct or fuller interpretation of the figures must be left to those better acquainted with the subject. It is noteworthy, however, that what appears to be an improvement in the waste of female lives which is noticeable among those born after the early eighties synchronises with the establishment of organisations for the protection of the aboriginals. It would, therefore, seem to be reasonable to suppose that if Protection Boards had been introduced earlier the disparity between the sexes at the older ages might have been modified materially. Medical attention is now made available at many centres of aboriginal population and experience shows that the death rate amongst both sexes is considerably reduced where the aboriginals are under the care and supervision of some relief institution.

Particulars concerning age were supplied with respect to 11,087 male and 8,899 female full-blood aboriginals totalling 19,986. Of this number 9.3 per cent. (8.6) were under 5 years of of age; 9.9 per cent. (9.5) 5 to 9 years; 7.6 per cent. (9.5) 10 to 14 years; 8.7 per cent. (9.3) 15 to 19 years; and 37.8 per cent. (38.6) were under age 21. The figures given in parentheses in this and subsequent paragraphs are the corresponding percentages for the general population which have been inserted for purposes of comparison. It will be seen that the age constitution for full-blood aboriginals who were less than adult age approximates closely to that for the non-indigenous population, and that the proportion of minors and adults is also very similar for both groups. The highest percentage of minors was recorded in Queensland 42 per cent., and the percentage of aboriginals under 21 years of age in the tropical area of Australia, 38 per cent., was slightly higher than that for the non-tropical section, 36 per cent.

/A remarkable

A remarkable similarity between the age constitution of the aboriginal and non-indigenous populations of Australia is also found in the adult age-groups, as will be seen from the following figures showing the percentage of full-blood aboriginals in each decennial age group as compared with the corresponding percentages for the general population (in parentheses) viz:-

Age group 20 to 29 years, 16.6 per cent. (16.9); 30 to 39 years, 15.3 per cent. (14.4); 40 to 49 years, 13.4 per cent. (13.0); 50 to 59 years, 9.9 per cent. (9.0); 60 to 69 years, 6.7 per cent. (6.2); 70 to 79 years 2.1 per cent. (3.1); and 80 years and over, 0.7 per cent. (0.7). The average age of full-blood aboriginals as at the Census of the 30th June, 1933 was as follows:- Males, 31.1 years (30.4); females, 28.7 years (30.6); persons, 30.0 years (30.5). It will be seen that the average age of male aboriginals was slightly higher, and females lower than the corresponding averages for the white population.

Some very interesting results are obtained by a comparison of the numbers of children under 5 years of age with the numbers of females between the ages of 15 and 45 years, for full-blood aboriginals and the white population separately in the tropical and non-tropical sections of Australia. The numbers of children under 5 years per 100 females aged 15-44 years were as follows, viz:- Full-blood aboriginals:- Tropical 40.3; Non-Tropical 52.8; Total Australia 43.0. White Population:- Tropical 45.0; Non-Tropical 36.6; Total Australia 36.9. On this basis the rate of increase for full-blood aboriginals was higher than that for the non-indigenous population in the non-tropical section and for Australia as a whole, but was lower in the tropical section of Australia. The lower percentage of aboriginal children in the tropics may be due to the greater susceptibility of aboriginal children to the hookworm infection.

CONJUGAL CONDITION: The probability that the marital condition was in some cases sanctioned by tribal laws or customs and in other cases by the rites of marriage according to civilized practice caused some doubt as to whether satisfactory replies would be received to the questions on this subject. Particulars as to conjugal condition were obtained concerning 19,586 full-blood aboriginals, and of those, 53.2 per cent. (55.5) had never married; 40.6 per cent. (39.2) were married; 6.1 per cent (5.0) were widowed; and 0.1 per cent. (0.3) divorced. A matter which may be of significance is the number of aboriginals who were returned as never having been married. The males who were stated as never married numbered 6,211 and the females 4,211. It appears that the term "married" may have been taken in some cases as referring only to legal marriage and in such cases those tribally married may have been recorded at the Census as never married. The aboriginal in his native state generally marries at an early age. Tribal marriage is part of an intricate system and amongst the full-blood aboriginals there are said to be very few females who are not either promised in marriage to a male native or married.

Another interesting feature in regard to the preponderance of males over females is revealed by the fact that for every 100 male aboriginals between the ages of 10 and 21 years there were only 83 females. This is definite evidence of a shortage in the number of females as prospective wives. Under the tribal system many young females are married by the older men who sometimes acquire more than one wife and it appears that many young unmarried men will be unable to secure partners from among the female aboriginals who are included in this investigation. It has been stated that the full-blood men often prefer to remain single rather than contract marriage with other castes.

DEPENDENT CHILDREN UNDER 16 YEARS OF AGE: In reply to this question the Census results show that 1,922 or 8 per cent. (13) of the 24,446 aboriginals enumerated, had dependent children under 16 years of age;

/the total number

the total number of such dependent children claimed being 4,434. This represents an average of 2.4 for each male with dependent children and 1.9 for each female with dependent children. The relatively small proportion of the aboriginal population claiming dependent children may be due to the number of aboriginal children supported by missions. The corresponding averages for the general population were very similar viz:- 2.3 and 1.8 respectively.

38 per cent. (38) of the male aboriginals with dependent children under 16 years of age had one dependent child; 24 per cent. (29) two children; 16 per cent. (16) three children; 11 per cent. (9) four children; 7 per cent. (4) five children; and 4 per cent. (4) more than five children. It will be seen that the average numbers of dependent children under age 16 in the aboriginal population differ very little from the corresponding figures for the non-indigenous population.

ORPHANHOOD: The number of full-blood aboriginal children under 16 years of age who were recorded at the Census of the 30th June, 1933 totalled 5,675, of whom 52 per cent. (51) were males and 48 per cent. (49) females. Of all children for whom particulars were stated, 84.7 per cent. (94.0) had both parents living; 6.4 per cent. (3.6) were without father living; 6.0 per cent. (2.1) without mother and 2.9 per cent. (0.3) were bereft of both parents. Of the aboriginal children recorded, 15.3 per cent. were stated to be bereft of one or both parents as compared with 6 per cent. of the general population. In view of the general similarity of the aboriginal and white populations with respect to age constitution and average number of dependent children there is some doubt concerning the accuracy of the replies to this question. The number of aboriginal children stated as being bereft of parents may possibly include those who have been segregated from their parents. In most institutions the majority of the aboriginal children are cared for in special homes or dormitories while the parents may be living in the adjoining village or camp.

SCHOOLING: The total number of aboriginal children at the ages of 6 to 14 years inclusive who were enumerated throughout the Commonwealth at the Census of the 30th June, 1933 was 3,104 and of these, 2,016 children or 65 per cent. were stated to be attending school. In New South Wales 66 per cent. of the aboriginal children of school age recorded at the Census were attending school; in Victoria 82 per cent.; Queensland 85 per cent.; South Australia 53 per cent.; Western Australia 38 per cent.; and in the Northern Territory 29 per cent. The number receiving instruction at Government schools totalled 1,446, or 47 per cent. and those attending private schools (missions) numbered 570, or 18 per cent. In many institutions on reservations, schools are conducted for general subjects and some for manual and domestic training. Children of native camps in the vicinity of Government schools are eligible for admission to them and in several cases special aboriginal schools have been established.

WAR SERVICE: Eight full-blood aboriginals were stated to have served abroad with the Australian Forces during the Great War of 1914-19.

RELIGION: Particulars concerning religion were given for only 8,081, or one-third, of the full-blood aboriginals enumerated at the Census. These all professed some Christian religion. The Church of England had the greatest number of adherents with 4,962, or 61 per cent.; followed by Roman Catholic and Catholic, undefined, together totalling 936, or 12 per cent.; Presbyterian 728, or 9 per cent.; Baptist 654, or 8 per cent.; and Lutheran 558, or 7 per cent.

INDUSTRY: Of the 24,446 full-blood aboriginals recorded at the Census of the 30th June, 1933, a total of 10,076 males and 2,142 females were stated to be breadwinners. The proportion of bread winners in the male population enumerated was 75 per cent. and the

/female 19 per cent.,

female 19 per cent., as compared with 70 per cent. and 24 per cent. respectively for the general population of Australia.

4,822 persons, or 54.6 per cent. of the aboriginal breadwinners for whom particulars concerning industry were stated, were engaged in the agricultural, pastoral and dairying industry; 2,135 persons, or 24.2 per cent. in domestic service; and 1,042 persons or 11.8 per cent. in fishing and trapping. 83 per cent. of the female aboriginal breadwinners were engaged in domestic service, and 68 per cent. of the male breadwinners in the agricultural, pastoral and dairying group - mainly the pastoral industries in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. 50.0 per cent. of the full-blood aboriginals enumerated at the Census were stated to be dependants as compared with 52.4 per cent. of the general population.

OCCUPATION: Information furnished concerning occupation shows that at the 1933 Census 2,112 aboriginals were employed as stock riders or boundary riders; 2,039 as domestic servants; 1,723 as station hands; 678 farm labourers; 410 seamen on luggers; 349 fishermen; 309 general labourers; 137 blacktrackers and 104 as pearl divers or shellers. 1,132 persons, excluding children, were inmates of benevolent or other institutions. Ablebodied aboriginals do not have any difficulty in securing employment during normal times, and these figures show that they are a factor of some importance in the development of the northern section of Australia.

GRADE OF EMPLOYMENT: 8,480 aboriginals, or 34.7 per cent. (32.4) of those enumerated at the Census, were in the wage-earning group; 397 persons, or 1.6 per cent. (2.3) were working on own account: and twelve males were stated to be employers of labour.

Of the wage-earning group 76.0 per cent. (67.5) were in employment as wage-earners at the date of the Census; 3.1 per cent. (8.0) were employed part-time; 6.3 per cent. (22.4) were stated to be unemployed; and 14.5 per cent. (2.1) were helpers not receiving wages. The corresponding percentages for the general population are shown in parentheses. One-eighth of the male aboriginals, and one-fifth of the female aboriginals, in the wage-earning group were engaged as helpers not receiving salary or wages. 24 per cent. of the wage-earning group in the Northern Territory, 15 per cent. in Western Australia and 11 per cent. in Queensland were employed as helpers without salary or wages. In many cases the settlement inmates, while awaiting remunerative employment, are occupied in maintenance work in the institution in return for their keep.

INCOME: Particulars concerning income were supplied for 8,776 of the 12,218 aboriginal breadwinners who were recorded throughout the Commonwealth at the date of the Census. Of 7,397 male breadwinners for whom the required particulars were given 42.3 per cent. (13.3) received no income during the year ended 30th June, 1933; 44.8 per cent. (24.3) received some income but less than £1 per week; 11.5 per cent. (16.5) between £1 and £2 per week; 1.2 per cent. (11.7) between £2 and £3 per week; and 0.2 per cent. (34.2) over £3 per week. The corresponding percentages for the general population are shown in brackets. During the year ended the 30th June, 1933 there was a severe depression in the industries which usually absorbed most of the aboriginal labour. Many of those shown as without income were being maintained as inmates of the settlements.

DWELLINGS: An attempt was made, also for the first time, to collect detailed information concerning the dwellings occupied by full-blood aboriginals who were residing in or adjacent to settlements. It was ascertained that of the 24,446 full-blood aboriginals recorded at the Census, 7,977, or 33 per cent. were inmates of private dwellings; 2,567, or 10 per cent. were inmates of charitable and other institutions; 8,108 or 33 per cent. resided in aboriginal camps, and 4,415, or 18 per cent., were inmates of dwellings of which other than full-blood aboriginals also were inmates.

/Particulars were

Particulars were obtained with respect to 1,861 dwellings occupied by full-blood aboriginals and, of these, 1,715 or 96 per cent. were private dwellings; 1,199 being located in the tropical part and 516 in the non-tropical area of Australia. In the tropics the average number of inmates per dwelling occupied by aboriginals was found to be 5.1 as compared with 3.5 in the non-tropical part of Australia. 559 camps of aboriginals were recorded at the Census; the average number living in each camp being 14. On Census day a total of 241 aboriginals were enumerated aboard 37 pearling luggers.

The matter ascertained from the necessarily brief and formal questions of a Census Schedule does not give a very complete picture of the housing conditions under which these full-blood aboriginals live. It is obvious, however, that where they are outside reservations, mission stations or other similar institutions or where they are domiciled in dwellings apart from white settlements the conditions are of a very primitive order. Structural particulars were given for 1,668 of the 1,715 private dwellings occupied by full-blood aboriginals. The walls of 33.9 per cent. were built of bushes etc; 24.4 per cent. were of iron; 15.8 per cent. of wood; 15.0 per cent. of bark; 6.8 per cent. of canvas etc.; 2.8 per cent. of brick or stone; and 1.3 per cent. of other materials.

Particulars concerning the number of rooms were supplied for 1,479 private dwellings occupied by full-blood aboriginals, and 49.2 per cent. of these consisted of one room; 28.3 per cent. of 2 rooms; 12.6 per cent. of 3 rooms; 6.9 per cent. of 4 rooms; and 3.0 per cent. of more than 4 rooms. The average number of rooms per occupied private dwelling was 1.9.

At the Census, information concerning nature of occupancy was obtained with respect to 1,265 of the 1,715 private dwellings occupied by full-blood aboriginals; 70.6 per cent. being occupied by owners and 14.3 per cent. by tenants.

In settlements such as those situated on the northern islands, the dwellings were constructed mostly of plaited coconut leaf and thatch or of galvanized iron and round timber, and were, in practically all cases, the property of the occupier on land to which he has a tribal title. In controlled settlements on the mainland the majority of dwellings were built of weatherboards, but these are the property of the settlement and the occupier has only a good conduct tenure. Others in the settlements were built of native materials such as thatch and bark and are regarded by the occupier as his own property. On the outskirts of many small towns there are native camps usually on the town reserve. These were built by the occupier from round timber and galvanized iron, bark, hessian or split kerosene tins. They are of little value and are generally abandoned by the occupier when moving to another district. On cattle stations and farms, huts are provided by the employer and in some cases bark gunyahs or huts are temporily erected by the aboriginal employees and their dependants.

NUMBERS RECORDED IN EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Particulars are also published in detail in the bulletin showing the number of male and female full-blood aboriginals enumerated in each Local Government Area in the several States of the Commonwealth at the Census of the 30th June, 1933.

In New South Wales the 1,034 full-blood aboriginals counted were scattered in small numbers throughout the State; the largest numbers recorded in any Local Government Area being as follows:- Kyogle Shire 96; Wingadee Shire 50; Harwood 30; Ashford 25; Macleay 23; Boolooroo 21; Eurobodalla 21; Bellingen 20; and Gundurimba 20. Twenty full-blood aboriginals were enumerated in Sydney and suburbs.

/In Victoria 60

In Victoria 60 of the total number of 92 full-blood aboriginals enumerated in the State were concentrated in Tambo Shire and eight were recorded in Melbourne and suburbs.

Of the 10,241 aboriginals recorded in Queensland, 4,857 were located in Cook Shire; Hinchinbrook Shire 970; Carpentaria Shire 558; Burke Shire 532; Murgon Shire 373; Duaringa Shire 257; Cairns Shire 254; Woothakata Shire 202; Herberton Shire 155; Douglas Shire 148, and Cardwell Shire 107. Twenty-seven were enumerated in the metropolitan area of Brisbane.

In South Australia of the 569 enumerated, the largest numbers were located at Meningie 67, Murat Bay 62, and Streaky Bay 24. Six full-blood aboriginals were enumerated in Adelaide and suburbs.

Of the total of 6,663 recorded in Western Australia, 2,216 were in Kimberley West district; Broome district 620; Wyndham district 594; Hall's Creek district 573; Port Hedland district 292; Mount Margaret district 250; the Tableland 228; Marble Bar district 213; Murchison district 173; Ashburton district 171; Upper Gascoyne district 161; Roebourne district 161; Nullagine district 156; and Meekatharra district 104. Twenty-six full-blood aboriginals were residing in Perth and suburbs.

A total of 5,847 were enumerated in the Northern Territory; the largest numbers being located in the Darwin police district 887; Timber creek district 644; Hermannsburg district 468; Newcastle Waters district 369; Stuart district 354; Roper River district 317; Wave Hill district 302; Arltunga district 274; Katherine district 264; Daly River district 258; and Frew River district 221. A total of 273 full-blood aboriginals were recorded in the town of Darwin.

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